



May 19, 2004

Providence man pleads guilty to firearms charge

Carlos Rodriguez, of Providence, has pleaded guilty to being a felon in possession of a firearm, admitting that he had a handgun on him when he fled from Providence Police officers in January. Rodriguez has prior felony convictions for robbery and cocaine trafficking.

The Office of the United States Attorney announced the guilty plea, which Rodriguez entered yesterday before U.S. District Court Judge Mary M. Lisi in U.S. District Court, Providence. Rodriguez, 26, of 869 Manton Avenue, is detained pending sentencing, which is scheduled for August 3.

At the plea hearing, Assistant U.S. Attorney Stephen G. Dambruch said that, had the case gone to trial, the government would have proven that, at about 1:00 AM on January 14, Providence Patrolmen Dennis O'Brien and Thomas Zincone observed Rodriguez and two other men sitting in a car parked on Whelan Street. Rodriguez exited the vehicle as the officers approached and they then heard what they believed to be the chambering of a round in a firearm.

Rodriguez then ran from the area, with the officers in pursuit. He tossed away a handgun and an ammunition magazine as he fled. The officers apprehended Rodriguez and recovered the handgun – a semi-automatic pistol – and the magazine.

Rodriguez pleaded guilty to one count of being a felon in possession of a firearm. The statutory maximum penalty is ten years in federal prison and a \$250,000 fine. Federal

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sentencing is determined on the basis of guidelines that rely on such factors as the specific nature of an offense and a defendant's criminal background, if any.

Providence Police and the **Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives** investigated the case. Assistant U.S. Attorney Dambruch is prosecuting it. The case was prosecuted under a **Project Safe Neighborhoods** initiative in which firearms cases are jointly reviewed by the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office and the U.S. Attorney's Office to determine where best to prosecute them. Project Safe Neighborhoods is a Department of Justice initiative against gun crimes and gun violence.

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